

Chiropractic

Chiropractic aims to enhance health, functional improvement, and well-being without the use of drugs or surgery.



Career Description

Chiropractors practice a drug-free and hands-on form of therapy, which may include manual therapies (ie, manipulation/adjustments); nutritional, dietary, and lifestyle counseling; physiotherapy; and physical medicine and rehabilitative exercises. For neuromusculoskeletal conditions, such as lower back pain, the services provided by a chiropractor may be the primary method of treatment. When other health conditions exist, chiropractors may support medical treatment.

Chiropractors assess patients to determine which treatments are best suited for a patient's condition. Chiropractors refer patients to other health care providers when chiropractic services are not suitable for the patient's condition.



Employment Characteristics and Outlook

Nearly 82% of chiropractors are in full-time practice, with the average chiropractor working between 40 and 45 hours per week. The majority (61%) of chiropractors work in solo practice.

Chiropractors determine their individual working hours and are able to arrange these hours by appointment. Job prospects for new chiropractors are expected to be good. In this occupation, replacement needs arise from retirement, and acute shortages exist in some areas of the United States. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment of chiropractors is expected to increase by 20% between 2008 and 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations.



Salary

The median annual income for chiropractors is approximately \$65,000, depending on geographic location and practice setting. Chiropractors have the potential to earn more than \$100,000 annually. In chiropractic, as in other types of independent practice, earnings are relatively low in the beginning and increase as the practice grows.



Educational Programs

Length. Chiropractors complete education in an accredited chiropractic college; four to five academic years of professional study are standard.

Prerequisites. The typical applicant at a chiropractic college has already acquired four years of undergraduate college education.

Curriculum. Chiropractic students study clinical subjects, including anatomy, physiology, rehabilitation, nutrition, and public health. Because of the hands-on nature of chiropractic, a significant portion of time is spent in clinical training.



Licensure/Certification/Registration

Chiropractors are required to be licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and all chiropractors are required to complete a comprehensive national board examination, which is administered by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners.



Inquiries

Careers

American Chiropractic Association (ACA)

1701 Clarendon Blvd

Arlington, VA 22209

(703) 276-8800

E-mail: memberinfo@acatoday.org

www.acatoday.org

For a listing of resources regarding a career in chiropractic, visit

www.acatoday.org/career

Certification/Registration

For a listing of state boards overseeing chiropractic licensure, visit:

www.acatoday.org/content_css.cfm?CID=753

Program Accreditation

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), an agency certified by the US Department of Education, currently recognizes 15 chiropractic programs at 18 different locations. For a listing of chiropractic colleges, visit www.acatoday.org/career. For the CCE, visit www.cce-usa.org.

Note: Adapted in part from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-2011 Edition*, Chiropractors, at www.bls.gov/oco/ocos071.htm.